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NORTON MOCKRIDGE

CIA Could Mean Cash In Advance

BROADWAY stage manager Robert Downing recently toured through Europe under State Department auspices to give talks on "The American Theater." He had a marvelous time and everything went well—with one exception.

This exception was the annoying way the checks from the State Department for his per diem allowance got delayed in the mail. Time and again when Bob reached a city in which he was to talk, there'd be no check waiting for him, and he had to cash his personal Travelers' Checks in order to eat.

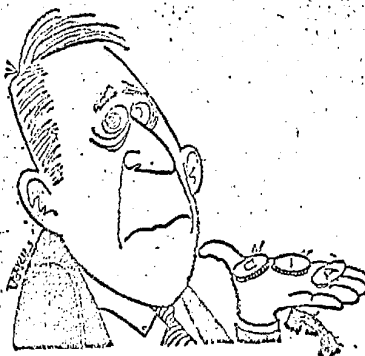
He communicated with the State Department, but there wasn't much improvement and he began to fear that he might run out of funds entirely. This was on his mind one night when he spoke in Nuremberg shortly after all the publicity on the CIA and its interesting subsidies had broken in the press.

During the question and answer period after his talk, a German rose in the audience and said, caustically: "I suppose you're speaking here for the CIA."

"Yes," said Bob, quickly. And there was a perceptible chill in the audience. "Yes," he went on, "but I made one mistake when I signed up. I always had thought that CIA means Cash In Advance."

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SINGER Andy Russell, back from 13 years south of the border, was being interviewed on WCBS the other day by Pat Summerall and he said—I swear it, I swear it—he said: "Yes, Pat, during those years I toured through every country in Latin America, including Spain."



AUTHOR'S AGENT Paul Reynolds was driving one morning from his house to the Chappaqua railroad station, when he suddenly realized that his Newfoundland dog, Abigail Adams, had slipped into the car and was sitting quite happily in the back seat.

He didn't have time to take the dog home so, when he got to the station, he gave Abigail to taximan John Cotter and asked him to take her back to the house. He then leaped aboard the train and took off for the city.

When he returned to the station that night, he went over to John and handed him a dollar, the usual cost of the taxi run.

"No," said John, "I want only 50 cents. People, I charge a dollar. Dogs are only 50 cents."

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ACTOR-PLAYWRIGHT John Cecil Holm loves to roam through cocktail parties or listen in buses and trains to pick up odd, disconnected bits of conversation. He

never knows, of course, what preceded the line or lines he hears, and he doesn't wait to find out what follows. He feels the lines are precious just as they are. Here are a couple of samples:

"... Her doctor says it's from eating all the cherries in the Manhattan..."

"... Well, she's 21 now, she's married, and it's time she learned there are other women..."

Got any good examples for me?

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A LITTLE BOY I know looked at his father as he came out of the shower and gazed in great wonderment at the very heavy growth of hair on his dad's chest and upper arms.

"Father," he said, "I hope you won't take offense, but I think you should be sheared."

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WILMA DOBIE of Scarsdale bought two baby ducklings for her daughter, and the pet store man advised: "Buy cedar chips for their box nest. Don't use torn-up newspapers because they might eat it and get lead poisoning from the print."

"Well," Wilma told me, "I'm a penny pincher from way back and each night, after I read your column, I tear up the page and put it in the nest. One of the ducks never touches the paper, but the other one eats your column and some of the rest of the page like mad. We call him 'Mock' and he seems to be all right—except that he's losing all the feathers around his neck. Do you think I should buy cedar chips, or should I change columns?"